



Students of the Year

2026-2027

The Louisiana Department of Education recognizes that exceptional students are enrolled in public, nonpublic, and charter schools throughout the state. To celebrate their accomplishments, the Department and the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education annually honor one fifth-grade, one eighth-grade, and one twelfth-grade student whose leadership, academic performance, achievements, citizenship, and service exemplify excellence.

The Students of the Year program provides an opportunity to highlight the achievements, accomplishments, and positive impact of exceptional students from school systems across Louisiana.

Selection Process

Each school system and charter management organization may nominate one student from each grade level (fifth, eighth, and twelfth grade) to compete at the state level. State-level honorees are selected through a competitive review process based on student accomplishments, leadership, academic performance, service, citizenship, and demonstrated contributions to their schools and communities.

Timeline

- **Application Materials Released (August 19, 2026)**
 - The application and related materials will be available in the Students of the Year Resources on the [Student Awards](#) page.
- **Webinar (August 19 and 20, 2026)**
 - The Department will host webinars to provide guidance and support to coordinators regarding the application process, requirements, and submission procedures.
- **School System-Level Coordinator Information Survey Due (September 9, 2026)**
 - School systems must submit contact information for their designated Students of the Year coordinator(s) through the required survey.
 - All program information, resources, and updates will be communicated directly to designated school system coordinator(s). Coordinator(s) are responsible for sharing applicable information and requirements with participating schools.
 - School systems will also submit contact information for individuals who will serve on state-level application review and semifinalist review panels.
- **State-level Applications Due (November 13, 2026)**

- State-level applications for each school system's fifth-, eighth-, and twelfth-grade nominees must be submitted through the online application portal.
- **Semifinalists Announced (January TBD, 2027)**
 - The Department will announce semifinalists. For each grade level, semifinalists will include four public school students, two nonpublic school students, and two charter school students per BESE region.
 - Essay prompts will be provided to the school system coordinator(s) of semifinalists for administration and submission through the online portal.
- **Finalists Announced (March TBD, 2027)**
 - The Department will announce 24 finalists, including eight students from each grade level, with one finalist representing each BESE region.
- **Finalist Interviews (Tentative- Week of March 15)**
 - All 24 finalists will participate in virtual interviews as part of the final selection process.
- **Awards Ceremony (TBD 2027)**
 - All 24 finalists will be recognized for their accomplishments, and the 2026–2027 Students of the Year honorees will be announced during the awards ceremony.

For questions, please contact exemplaryeducator@la.gov.